

1.1 Oakland, Maine Assessing Department

Interview Type	Personal, Municipality	
Interview Location	Oakland Town Assessing Office	
Interview Date	November 7, 2001	
Summary Date	November 17, 2001	
Interviewer	AGI / Richard Sutton (rs@appgeo.com)	
Interviewed:	Kathleen Martin, Assessor	
Staff Size (approx)	2	
Budget (approx)		
URL:	http://www.kvcog.org/cities/oakland.phtml	(KVCOG summary)

1.1.1 Agency Overview

Oakland is a town of approximately 6000 people in northern Kennebec County, immediately west of Waterville. It is primarily a residential suburb, but also contains seasonal development along its four lakeshores. It contains more than 2500 housing units over an area of 27 square miles. The Assessing Department, consisting of Kathleen Martin and one assistant, manages less than 80 parcel changes per year on a base of just over 3400 parcels. The computer assisted mass appraisal system is Trio.

1.1.2 GIS Initiatives

1.1.2.1 Overview of GIS Utilization

Oakland Assessing currently has no in-house GIS capabilities.

1.1.2.2 GIS Operating Environment and Infrastructure

Oakland Assessing has adequate computer hardware to accommodate desktop GIS (ArcView or MapInfo) installation and operation, but is neither using nor planning to acquire these capabilities.

1.1.2.3 GIS Data Resources and Requirements

1.1.2.3.1 Spatial Data

Oakland Assessing maintains no digital spatial data layers. Parcel lines are maintained as inked mylar overlays over black and white aerial photographs on D-size sheets. These are accurate and updated on an annual basis under contract with Aerial Survey and Photo, Inc., of Norridgewock, Maine.

Shoreland zoning is maintained as a hand-maintained map in collaboration with Kennebec Valley Council of Governments (KVCOG) in Fairfield, Maine.

Comprehensive Plan mapping layers exist in hardcopy form from a plan executed in 1989 and updated in 1996 by Market Decisions of South Portland. These layers appear to be hand drawn over a townwide parcels composite and include:

- Built environment
- Transportation

- Water resources
- Public facilities & services
- Soils and agricultural productivity
- Land cover (wetlands, fields, wooded areas, urban areas, disturbed areas, open water)
- Soils (septic suitability)
- Soils (drainage)
- Soils (forest productivity)
- Cultural and recreational resources
- Topography (elevation)
- Topography (slope)
- Development constraints

None of these layers are available in digital format.

Currently unavailable but desired data sets include more accurate shoreland zoning data. Kathleen Martin serves as the E-911 administrator for the town and as such handles road changes and updates in collaboration with Maine OGIS. To support this effort she would like accurate and prompt confirmation of her changes in the hardcopy sheets provided by OGIS. She is generally very satisfied with this initiative in spite of the extra work it creates for her.

1.1.2.4 GIS Applications and Application Requirements

Oakland neither maintains nor utilizes GIS applications at present.

Planned future GIS activity and applications:

Oakland has no current plans for GIS activities within Assessing or elsewhere in town government. Size of the municipality, rate of parcel changes and the overall manageable nature of activities make current practices satisfactory for the near term. Kathleen Martin is amenable to utilizing GIS and other technological advances for enhancing productivity, filling map requests and analyzing development patterns within the town, but finds it hard to justify the expense and time investment associated with these changes.

1.1.3 Other Relevant Issues

Oakland is typical of the towns that have attempted to adopt zoning on numerous occasions over the years but remain regulated only by shoreland zoning statutes. Land use regulation is seen by a significant part of the local population as an unwelcome infringement on individual rights. This is of some concern given recent trends in development. A modern, regional business park is under construction on the border of Oakland and Waterville, and when tenants begin moving in this will quickly accelerate development pressures in Oakland and in surrounding areas. Without appropriate proactive land use regulation and planning, Oakland will almost certainly have difficulty managing this growth in the years ahead.

Oakland Assessing maintains a close relationship to the assessing departments of surrounding municipalities. Some of these have taken significant steps to advance GIS in

their departments, and are willing to make their services available for technical assistance and information sharing. Waterville, for example, has demonstrated the parcel automation and Web-delivery system it has built. Kathleen Martin would be amenable to using such technology, but can't justify the expenditure necessary to acquire it.

1.1.4 Major Benefits and Cost Justification

Oakland will benefit from access to growth management and development tracking capabilities in the short term. Most of the components for building and maintaining a planning-level GIS are available with a small amount of technical assistance. While on-site digital parcel maintenance or large format atlas production may not be in Oakland's immediate future, the tools and data for town-wide spatial analysis should be made readily available to assessing, planning and other town officials.